

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



"WHY! IT'S NEVER YOU, MISS BARRY, IS IT?"

DAVID LLOYD'S LAST WILL.

CHAPTER V.—JOHNSON'S OLD DICTIONARY.

MARK's question was answered by the apparition of a figure scarcely visible beckoning from a doorway with a hand but half outstretched. He asked Richard Crichton to wait a few minutes at the door, and then he obeyed the reluctant summons, entering into an utterly dark kitchen, where there was the spluttering and hissing of a match being struck, and brief sparks of light shining upon the withered features of a grey

face. When the candle was lit he saw a room perfectly stripped of furniture, and with no seat but a square pile of bricks from the ruined house, upon which the man, its sole occupant, had been sitting in the dark. He stood now confronting Mark, with a bitter smile hovering about his pinched mouth, and glancing from his visitor to the only seat he could offer him. He tried to laugh, a poor and hollow laugh; but his hand which held the candle trembled, and his wrinkled eyelids quivered with something else but laughter.

"Things are come to a bad pass with you," said Mark, gently.

"Could na' be worse," answered the man, "brass all gone; furnishing and credit all gone too; how aw'm to poo' through another day, aw dunna' know. Eh! but it's a awful day for me. The Lord's day, yo' ca' it. Dun yo' know what a sore thing it is to starve and clem o' the Lord's day? Neither bite nor sup ha' crossed my lips to-day; yet aw reckon the Lord could do summat if he would."

"Are you living alone?" asked Mark.

"No; not if yo' ca' it living; aw dunna'," was the answer; "there's my old woman *living* up-stairs. Aw begged her a sup o' skim milk this morning; for it's harder work dying wi' an empty belly, than living wi' it, as how it is. Aw've not been worse clemmed to-day nor yesterday; and it's better on the Lord's day as yo' ca' it, when the court's quiet, and the children off to Sunday-school, and the folks keep o' th' inside of their houses. We're all decent people in this court; and nobody's been a-begging yet, but aw reckon aw mun turn out i' the morning. Pride must eat humble pie, yo' know, and it's the only pie aw'm like to get till the times mend."

The speaker laughed again. Mark looked round once more, and saw a large book covered with green baize lying on the floor beside the heap of bricks. It looked like a carefully-preserved family Bible.

"You are reading, I see," he said, pointing to the book.

"Aw was reading," answered the man, "as long as the dayleet lasted; but aw'm saving my candle, for fear my poor lass up-stairs should be struck wi' death i' the neet-time. It's a rare oud book. Many a bit o' learning and pleasure have aw gotten out o' it."

"It is the Bible, I suppose?" said Mark.

"Na, na, lad," he replied, laughing, "no Bibles for me. It's Johnson's oud dictionary. Aw search out a word, and read what he says under it, from all th' oud writers. Wait yo' a minute. Aw'll look for the word hunger, and read yo' out the examples. Tak' houd o' the candle for me."

Mark took the candle, and watched the face of the man, as he fumbled over the yellow leaves of the book. It was a shrewd, keen face, withered and wrinkled into a thousand lines; but Mark judged him to be still under fifty years of age.

"Hunger!" he read, slowly and emphatically, following each word with his finger, "an uneasy sensation at the stomach for food. When the stomach is empty, and the fibres in their natural tension, they draw up so close as to rub against each other, so as to make that sensation; but when they are distended by food, it is again removed: unless when a person fasteth so long, as for want of spirits, or nervous fluid, to have those fibres grow too flaccid to corrugate, and then we say he has fasted away his stomach."

"That's from Quincy," said the reader, looking up over his horn spectacles. "Aw wonder if Quincy ever fasted away his stomach. Here lower down, Bacon says, 'Odours do in a small degree nourish; and we see men an hungered love to smell hot bread.' If he'd ha' lived to these times, and been a throstle spinner, he'd ha' had some sort of a chance of knowing how much the smell o' hot bread 'ud nourish a hungry stomach. It's a rare oud book, is Johnson's oud dictionary."

"I wish it had been the Bible instead," said Mark, with a friendly look into the man's withered face.

"Dunno' thee talk o' th' Bible," he answered, sullenly, "aw've bin a religious man mysel', and what has it done for me? Aw beckoned yo' in for nought else but to speak to my wife. Hoo heard yo' a-singing, and hoo used to be a rare hand at psalm-singing hersel'."

"I've a friend outside who is a doctor," said Mark; "let me call him in, and he may give your wife something to do her good. Has she had any doctor?"

"What's the use of a doctor?" asked the man, "her sickness is starvation, and no doctor can cure that. 'What! did he marry me to famish me?' says the old dixonary. Eh! my lad, aw'd no thought o' times like these, when I wed yon poor lass."

Without waiting to reply, Mark opened the house door, and called quietly to Richard Crichton. The court had relapsed into its former stillness and apparent desertion, only Richard was still lingering about in expectation of Mark's reappearance. He entered the house, and received a surly nod of greeting from its master, who led the way up-stairs into a chamber as bare and desolate as the kitchen below, in one corner of which lay the wasted form of a woman, apparently of forty years of age. At the sound of footsteps, and the glimmer of a candle, she turned towards them a face sallow and shrunken, lit up by deeply-sunk eyes, in which there still gleamed a fitful and feverish life. By dint of a great effort she raised herself upon her elbow, and her sunken eyes looked mournfully into Mark's pitying face, as, with a gesture of despair, she pointed a thin hand to a broken basket at her feet. Her husband stooped down to withdraw the apron which covered it, and Mark, glancing over his shoulder, saw the little corpse of a baby but a few days old. The whole history of the case was told to him by the sorrowful sight; and as the apron fell over the tiny face and figure, the father sat down upon the floor beside the basket, with his face between his hands, and muttered as if to himself, "It's deed, it deed yesterday. That's o' that's left on it now."

"I don't make no moan over it, sir," said the soft, wailing voice of the woman, in the accent of the country people of the midland counties; "it's a hard world at the best of times, and it's safe with my other children where God Almighty lives. I'm only waiting to hear him call, and then I'm going too. Only it's long a-coming, and it's sore work lying here in pain hearkening for it. I thought when they began a-singing in the court, that maybe the angels were coming for me. But I'm glad to see you, sir, and thank you kin'ly for coming in."

She spoke with great difficulty, and under the choking of gradual suffocation. Richard Crichton shook his head as Mark looked from the woman's face to his. The gay, handsome countenance of the young student wore an expression of pain and disgust. He felt himself too refined and sensitive to look upon such a scene of squalid and unmitigated suffering, and his æsthetic temperament was suffering upon every point. In choosing his profession he had anticipated only the career of a fashionable and courted physician, associated with the wealthy classes, where disease, and even death, should be gracefully and decorously attended by every alleviation possible to wealth. But to stand beside a woman dying of want upon a poor heap of straw, with her dead infant in a broken basket at her feet, filled him with unutterable loathing and horror. He put his mouth close to Mark's ear, and spoke in hurried and whispered words.

"She's positively dying," he said; "it is no use in the world for us to stay here, we can do nothing for her; she cannot live more than an hour or two. Let us give the man a few shillings and be gone."

"I am going to stay," answered Mark, aloud. "You would like me to stay with you an hour or two?" he added, speaking to both the man and his wife. The husband looked up and nodded silently; and the woman stretched out her hand, as if to feel for Mark's living grasp. Richard Crichton hesitated for a minute, and then stole softly from the room, and down the narrow staircase.

"I can't think I know you," said the woman, in her weak, yet shrill voice; "but you mind me of the time when I was young, and at service down in the country. It was at a Mr. Lloyd's, of Clunbury, and my sister Nanny is servant there still. Oh! if Nanny only knew, she'd be with me now."

"I know her very well," said Mark, "and Mr. Lloyd too. My name is Mark Fletcher, and I often go down to Clunbury."

"I recollect you now, Mr. Mark," she answered, with a last flash of interest: "you were to have married Miss Ellen. It were a sad blow to you, that was; and to her poor mother."

Mark sighed, but there was no longer a keenness of sorrow in his sigh. The blow had fallen upon him ten years before; and in reality it was little more than the habit of sighing when it was mentioned, which remained to him of the ancient grief. There was a tranquil pity for himself, forming the secret basis of his compassion for other sorrows, which made the long-past pain almost a luxury of memory. But the mutual knowledge and remembrance of it formed a link between him and the dying woman. He watched beside her for the few fleeting minutes which remained of life, and administered to her with his own hands the scanty relief and comfort which had come too late. So gently and deftly did he perform his office—a skill which had been learned by watching beside many sick beds—that more than once the dying face was faintly illuminated by a smile, and the broken voice whispered feeble words of gratitude. Towards the last moment the woman roused herself, and called her husband to her side.

"Make thy way down into the country, Reuben," she said, anxiously, "it's good living there in the fresh air, and among the fields; and Nanny'll help thee. She'll get thee on at some farm, maybe, till the bad times are past, and then thee canst come back. Only go down to Nanny, and she'll look out for some work to suit thee."

In a few minutes after this laboured utterance, Mark and the husband descended the stairs, and called in two of the neighbouring women to attend to the dead. The old dictionary still lay on the floor beside the heap of bricks, and the man sat down as he had been sitting before, picked it up, and turned over its leaves mechanically, while Mark addressed to him some few and simple words of religious teaching. As Mark turned away, however, after bidding him good-night, and was about closing the house door after him, Reuben Clough called out in a husky voice, "Good-night to yo', and aw thank yo' kindly; and if ever aw can do yo' a good turn, aw'll not forget it."

CHAPTER VI.—BARRY'S FIRST ECONOMY.

BARRY very quickly made her arrangements for her journey to Clunbury. She selected her simplest

and least-stylish dress, partly from a sense of fitness for her errand, and partly because she and Mab had instinctively adopted a less fashionable appearance whenever Mr. Lloyd paid them a visit in Manchester; which he did twice a year, in order to collect his rents, and transact sundry matters of business with his bankers. Barry's travelling costume was of the most unpretending character; for with a native strength and decision of mind, which enabled her promptly to understand, and as promptly to adapt herself to her circumstances, she was resolved to travel down to Clunbury third-class. There was a good deal of third-class travelling at that time in Lancashire, though the number of travellers fell off by thousands. Fortunately for Barry's resolution, there was no one to start her off except Mab; and Mab expostulated and protested with tears of angry mortification. Mr. Christopher Lloyd had gone down to Devonshires' warehouse to receive his last instalment of salary; and Barry had peremptorily forbidden Richard Crichton to come to the station to see her off; though she was haunted by a lively dread of his disobedience. She was afraid she should sink very low in Richard's estimation if he saw her step into a third-class carriage. Yet he loved her; Barry was sure of that, though he had said nothing definite in words; or why should he look into her eyes as he did, and speak to her in low, suggestive tones, and clasp her hand lingeringly, and bring her his favourite books to read, and write letters to her upon the most trivial and frivolous pretexts? Even his fondness for Mab, a caressing, petting, patronising fondness, was only a proof that he already regarded and loved Mab as a dear younger sister, as he had once said to her inadvertently. Barry would have been hotly indignant if any one had merely hinted that the young man was doing no more than gratify his own love for and appreciation of the beautiful. After all, Barry might have been riding in some fairy carriage through an enchanted region, instead of in a third-class compartment upon the London and North-Western Railway. Her face beamed and shone, and her grey, dreamy eyes sparkled and flashed, until her fellow-passengers, of whose presence she was unconscious, caught something of the sunshine, and lost sight of their own gloom and care for a few minutes, to smile at and with her. When the train stopped at the station where she was to alight, Barry shed one last bright beam upon the poor occupants of the carriage, and they lost sight of her for ever.

It was a small country station, with a carefully-tended flower-bed bordering the far side of the platform, where grew yellow sunflowers, and crimson snapdragons, and a few well-nurtured dahlias, which had not yet been nipped by too hard a frost. No other passenger had alighted from the receding train, and the ticket-collector looked aggrieved, and the porter downcast, for all Barry's luggage consisted of a small travelling-bag, which she intended, in her new desire to economise, to carry herself. But both ticket-clerk and porter were startled into sudden animation by the glance flashed upon them from Barry's eyes. It was a glance unconsciously given to the absent medical student, but both of them received it into their hearts, and pressed forward in the hope of rendering some assistance to the bright-looking girl who had so quickened their sluggish feelings. She was going to Clunbury Heath House—could either of them do anything for her? Would she have a conveyance from the village? Or should

the porter carry her portmanteau? They thanked her when she answered that they could do nothing for her; thanked her, though they scarcely knew it, for her frank and pretty face, and her pleasant tones.

It was plain that as yet coming events had not cast any very deep shadow beforehand upon Barry's path. She was cheerful this morning; even buoyant. The moral courage she had displayed in making her first economy—for it had needed a good strong effort on the part of Christopher Lloyd's daughter to sacrifice appearance and comfort by travelling third-class—had met with an instant reward in a glow of pleasant self-approbation. She had left Lancashire, moreover, with its strange atmosphere of adversity, behind her, and was breathing the calm, pure air of the open country. The rich scents of autumn floated about her as she crossed the fields, where the memory of the harvest was still lingering in the fallow, unploughed ground, and the yellow stubble, amongst which flocks of geese were picking up the grains shed from the over-ripe ears. The withered leaves rustled down from the trees, and fled before the slight breeze along the narrow path she trod under the hedge-row, as if trying to provoke her ready laughter. She stopped now and then to gather a ripe blackberry or two from the crimson-coloured brambles; and she stirred the branches of the hazel-bushes to look for nuts. There was only one thing wanting to perfect her enjoyment. The place was too silent, and too solitary for her happy heart. Scarcely a sound caught her listening ear, and no face or form of a fellow-creature was in sight. Overhead the rooks flew heavily and slowly above the fallow fields, and descended now and then with a whirl and flutter of wings; but even they were silent with their weight of business. She wished she had somebody with her. Who should it be? Her father? or Mab? or Richard Crichton?

Though she was alone, Barry did not hurry over the fields; and when she reached the border of the heath, she came to a stand-still altogether, and sat down on the last stile to take in leisurely the view before her. The ground rose and fell in soft undulations, with small, hollow dimples dotted about it, almost as far as her eye could reach, without any trees breaking its monotony. A little earlier in the year the whole plain must have been covered with a carpet of purple heather; but there was little of it left now, except here and there upon the sunny side of some dimple, there was a purple line just under the brim, contrasting with the blackness of the peat beneath it. A few blossoms of gorse were still lingering like stray spots of gold upon the dark heath, and against the bright bronze of the faded ferns. In the distance there hung a dim hazy veil of vapour, losing itself in the upper clouds, but leaving narrow vistas for Barry's eyes to penetrate. At the end of one of these misty avenues could be seen a cluster of trees, growing upon a mound so smooth and regular in outline as to appear artificial; and in the midst of the trees stood a large, old-fashioned house, whose chimneys and upper storeys were visible among the topmost branches. Barry had only to cross the heath at its narrowest place, and she would make her unexpected appearance upon her uncle's threshold.

The house, as she drew nearer to it, showed itself as a long pile of building, the two ends of which rose to the height of three storeys, while the centre consisted of two only. It was built of red brick, which

had long since been toned down and dulled by winter storms. The thick wood-work of the windows had been painted black many years ago, but they were now decayed and weather-stained, and many broken panes were in them, through which the rain and dust drifted into the rooms within. The front door had once been of glass, through which a pleasant view of the heath had been seen from the large entrance-hall; but the glass was all gone, and the rotten shutters kept their place by day as well as by night. All around it had a desolate and decayed aspect. The three broad stone steps before the front door were overgrown with lichens and moss, and the nettles grew thickly under the window-sills, and along the terrace. There was no sign of habitation, and Barry, after standing and looking over the dilapidated gate, with its rusty latch and hinges, turned slowly away, and went round to the back of the house. Her gay spirits had taken flight, and a feeling of pain and dread was tugging at her heart.

The back of Clunbury Heath House was a trifle more animated than the front, for a solitary rosy-cheeked child was at play, who stood and stared at Barry with mingled curiosity and timidity, ready to fly home at the least alarm. There was besides a pig-sty conveniently situated near to the kitchen-door, and a large house-dog lay under its shelter, blinking lazily at her in the hazy sunshine. She could hear also a voice, high-pitched and tuneless, which was crooning over a slow measured hymn tune, accompanied by a singular and harsh jangling, which set Barry's teeth on edge, and made her ears tingle. She advanced cautiously past the pig-sty and the dog, who flapped his thick tail half threateningly against the ground, and found upon the other side a tall and gaunt woman seated upon a block of wood, and busily engaged in sifting cinders through a very fine sieve. The square shoulders and long back of this odd figure were presented to Barry, the bended head covered, and the face completely hidden from view by the poke of an old cotton milking-bonnet. The light grey ashes, disturbed by the faintest breeze, formed a kind of thin cloud about the absorbed woman, who from time to time paused from her sifting and singing to gather up the winnowed cinders, as carefully as she might have gathered together so much corn, and to deposit them in a large bag made of newspaper which lay beside her.

"Nanny!" cried Barry, loudly, for the woman was again threading her difficult way through the doleful measure of her psalm, and the rattling of the cinders against the screen kept up their jarring accompaniment. Upon hearing an unexpected voice, Nanny turned her carefully-shaded face to view, and uttered a scream of recognition and astonishment—

"Why! it's never you, Miss Barry, is it?" she cried; "whatever is it brings you here in this way? The master doesn't expect you, nor the missis either, for the matter of that. Is there anything wrong at home?"

"Where is my aunt?" asked Barry, evading the question.

"It's her mid-day season of meditation," answered Nanny, mysteriously, "and she mustn't be broke in upon till it's over; and the master's gone to Clunbury market. But if you wrote to say you was coming the letter's missed, for they don't expect you, or else master 'ud have put out a extra allowance of things. Why! it's not more than twelve months since we had Miss Mab for a week."

"Aren't you glad to see me, Nanny?" asked Barry, in an insinuating tone.

"Ay, sure I am, my dear," said Nanny, good-naturedly, "but I'm wondering about dinner. Well, well, I'll manage it some way, and perhaps missis 'ill feel inclined to fast to-day. If her meditating isn't over by one, she'll want no dinner, and 'ill put herself off till tea. Ay! I'm always glad to see your face, Miss Barry; but Miss Mab's a little too high and too dainty for any of us down here."

"What are you doing?" inquired Barry.

"I'm riddling the cinders out of the hess-pit," she answered; "there's a hess-pit under the kitchen-grate as catches all the cinders, and at a spare time like this I riddle 'em for burning again. 'Wilful waste makes woful want,' you know. The master nor me can't abide waste."

"What little girl is that, Nanny?" was Barry's next question, as she loitered beside the ash-heap, reluctant to enter the dismal house alone. Her heart was beginning to fail her, as she thought of her errand, and took notice of the signs of extreme poverty, or extreme parsimony, about her.

"It's old Mike Trevor, the mole-catcher's, granddaughter," replied Nanny; "we've let him the end of the house, where the old servants' hall and back staircase was; he has that and two bedrooms for £5 a year, which is a clear gain, and now and again he brings us in a rabbit. He's a good neighbour is Mike, and we're not so lonesome. But you go in, my dear, and wait till one, and if the missis doesn't come out of her meditation by then, I'll bring you in a bit of dinner by yourself. You'll be all over hess if you stay aside of me; and such handsome things as you are wearing, to be sure!"

COUNTRY STROLLS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE."

NO. I.—TAKING A WALK.

THE quiet weeks are coming now,
The muffled weeks of fallen snow;
Gone are the shortening days, and gone
The wistful, transient gleams that shone,
Pale, shadow-chased, across the moor,
The sheeny bay, the sandy shore;
But in the wet, leaf-scattered lane
Got leave to rest, and time to smile,
Till thin wind-hurried clouds again
Brake in upon their waiting-while.
Gone is the fallow's ochre-gold,
Gone the red ribs of clayey-mould.
In throngs the first leaves sped away;
The lingering few that tried to stay,
Though brave October's wrath to dare,
They lost their heart, when all grew bare,
Nor brooked November's still despair;
They left the branches one by one,
Now all the yellow leaves are gone.
The very evergreens, I trow,
Are changed to cupolas of snow;
And the long nights are with us now.

Close out the garden drear and dun
With full red curtains. Draw each one
His chair to its accustomed nook;
Let each take down his favourite book—
A volume not too deep or flat
To blend with after-dinner chat,

—Bright effervescence that will die
Into still reading by-and-bye.
But lo, a clattering euphony
Of Emma coming with the tea.
Tiresome! deranging Cyril's strew,
And Tom's and Maud's backgammon too.
Tea made, from cares that business brings
Retired, the careless kettle sings:
'Twere pity it should sing alone,
Go girls, and get your Mendelssohn!
Or would you the dear father please,
(His half-closed book laid on his knees,
His fingers drumming on the chair),
Sing him some simple Scottish air,
And then some Irish melodies.

Dear winter evenings when they come,
Most filled with memories of home;
Warm firelight hours: at such a time
Can any charm of prose or rhyme
Tempt many readers from the fire
To stroll with me through slush and mire,
And leave the book and cheery talk,
Through sleet and snow to "take a walk"?
A country walk, a string of such,
Surely I seem to ask too much.
'Twere best to bide a fitter time
For country walks in prose or rhyme;
When dry March blows the welkin blue,
Of walking we may talk to you.
Till then,—

Nay, bid me not adieu!

The iron months their beauties bring,
Linked hand in hand to silver Spring,
And this to golden Summer, then
To tarnished Autumn this. Again
Comes Winter. But if you decline
In praise of winter-walks to join,
Keep by your fire. But own with me
No fitter time can ever be
Than when the fierce sleet whips the pane,
For calling back to mind again
The summer chiefly valued now;
The leaves best loved because the bough
Is bankrupt of them. Many a stroll,
Little regarded when the whole
Of the bright year before us lay,
Comes sweetly back some winter's day.
And when you have no least desire
To trudge through melting snow and mire,
It seems of all the fittest time
(Heaping new coal upon the fire)
To seek the aid of prose or rhyme
To summon back before your eyes
Full-foliaged trees and summer skies.
And if I own, upon the whole,
Winter least fitted for the stroll,
This maxim I have underlined—
'Tis best for calling them to mind.

I hardly know what made me strike into this homely kettle-song. However, let it remain and serve as an apology where probably none was needed. I am to take a series of meditative walks with my friends (almost old friends now) and readers. The subject of "walks" seems to me one on which there is a preliminary something to be said; and this opening paper the fit place for the saying it.

A walk: the very process of walking, how curious it seems if you come really to analyse it, to think about it. How tedious and monotonous a method

of passing from place to place. I have sometimes perversely wearied myself in fancy, by fixing my eye on a point some half-a-mile away, and considering and dwelling upon the (I could make it seem) tiresome process by which I must lessen and consume the distance between it and me. Foot placed before foot in turn—and how many times must this be done before that sign-post was reached?—it became wearisome to let the mind dwell on it. How different the swift flash of the swallow; the smooth easy glide of that rook whose strained still wings have never moved all the time that I have been watching him. But I must plod on, step after step; such a slow, mechanical, dull process, an advance so gradual as hardly to seem an advance at all, while the thought is fixed upon the manner of it. And if we come to compute the number of these insignificant movements which must be made before half-a-mile—a mile—ten miles—can be overpassed, why the idea becomes oppressive. So many thousands of little movements of the legs; you feel inclined to stop in your place, like the "Discontented Pendulum," after a similar train of thought. But if you *do* stop and lean on a stile, to think the matter out, why see, that brisk walker who was some way behind you has caught you up, passed you, and is already close to the sign-post. You have mused but ten minutes; yet this short space of time, employed in action, not consumed in speculation, has sufficed to bring the patient and practical traveller so far on the road that you will not now come up to him.

From which trifling fancies some useful thoughts arise. One, that action without speculation is better than speculation without action. The man who leans upon a stile by the wayside, and frets his mind with many subtleties and refinements concerning the journey and the mode of it, has but his speculations, and perhaps a miserable discontented scepticism, for his pains. The unsophisticated poor peasant say, who has no turn for such self-tormenting philosophy, but plods steadily on according to the instructions of the sign-posts and waymarks, will have achieved considerable progress, and have got over much ground, while the other was standing still. So long as the end is attained, what so greatly matters the process by which it was reached? But many thinkers neglect the practical for the speculative part merely of religion. Thus simpler minds pass them in the way; and this not only in practice, but in knowledge too. The thing is to be advancing step after step, by however gradual processes. For while we are walking, we can be also thinking, if we have a turn that way. The legs will go steadily on when once set on the road, leaving the mind free to work too, while they are grinding on patiently and persistently all the while. Religious contemplation, even religious inquiry, is a thing lawful, if not a thing commanded. But it is only profitable, or even safe, when it is associated with active and forward movement.

Then, again, how apt we are, as we plod along the road of growth in grace and holiness, to weary of the mere step set before step, the little-by-little advance; and to desire wings, that, with no toil, with no strain, with no delay, we might attain at once the point that seems so far ahead of us. But if we stopped disheartened, we see perhaps how great a space they have overcome who were still pressing on while we stayed to indulge in a morbid despair. Little steps achieve great distances.

But, to leave my moralising, let me return to the process of literal walking. I have often watched

that steady smooth delicious glide of the rook above me, and thought to myself, what an intense delight it must be to fly! It seems so strange to see the birds, our inferiors, passing, by such an angelic process, and with such ease and safety, from place to place at pleasure: inhabitants of the upper regions, while we must crawl below. And, looking beyond this life, after a fashion which becomes a sort of instinct to one who begins the habit, I have often thought whether one of our future (physical) delights may not be this process of flying. Fancy it! the delicious gliding ease: casting yourself off that precipice from which you now recoil sick and giddy, and floating over the wide natural map; hearing, with no fear, but with exultant enjoyment, the far-below dash of the fathomless sea; not restricted to here a Wyndeliff, and there a Symond's Yat: but passing, on tense and unmovable wings, from point to point of magnificent view. I have had the feeling (and I believe others are not strange to it) in dreams—this delicious power of gliding at will, though only just above the surface of the ground—the power, it seemed, of mind over matter. They say this dream (if dream it be) ceases to come to us after our younger days; I was pleased, then, to find it revisit me but a few weeks ago. And I can fancy the delight which I hope some day to experience, of this almost effortless motion in the air.—Casting myself fearless from a beetling cliff? passing over the Atlantic? Nay, this is but to take the measure of our tiny world. To cast ourself from one world, and pass across the stupendous ocean of space, on our safe passage to another star; this is that to which our innocent and wondering speculations may attain. The joys of Heaven are many-sided: perhaps we are apt to look at them, or rather to anticipate them, only from one side, the spiritual side. But (certainly without encroaching upon this highest thought of them) let us remember that there is, also, what we may call the bodily or physical part of that enjoyment to be regarded. The redemption of the Body, that is part of the work of Christ: and this part of the future consummate joy, after the resurrection, is not to be left out of our thought. What will that Resurrection Body be? Who can in the least guess? But we are to be like our Lord: this St. John tells us; *when He shall appear*. Read, then, the 1st chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, and contemplate the description (figurative, but suggesting ineffable glory) of the Son of Man, in the glory of his risen human nature. (For, as God, no one has seen God at any time, and lived. It was as man still, though man glorified, that God the Son appeared to the apostle.) Read that description, and if it sadden you for a moment to see the chasm that has suddenly arisen between the Master and the disciple whom Jesus loved—who yesterday lay on his bosom, and to-day falls at his feet as dead—if this sadden you for a moment, let your thoughts rise beyond the present disappointment, to the wonderful future satisfaction. What, then, shall we become at the resurrection, if then we are to be able to endure, yea, to bask in, that tremendous majesty? What power, what freedom, what development of capacity, not only intellectual, but physical! And to this phase of thought belongs this of mine about flying; it is not so trivial as an unimaginative mind might at first think it. Passing from star to star with angel-friends: picture it, think of it, world-absorbed minds! At least I will,

as I start for my winter walk; 'tis a more practical matter really than speculations on stocks and shares, and brow-seaming intentness on the state and the prospects of the money market. "Ah! what will the music be there!" exclaimed one on her death-bed to me, as some sweet melodies rose from below stairs to soothe her weary painful waiting. And I thought the idea one rather to develop than to check.

Well, but meanwhile we must be content with our walking powers; nor ought this to be a difficult task. How delightful this exercise may be, and often is! Thus, when you have been wearied and worried; some troublesome letter; some vexation or disappointment; some harass or distress, and have been brooding in your room all an early summer's morning, and come in with heavy heart and cloudy brow, to lunch; I will tell you how I should treat your case. I should run over in my mind some little expedition that I fancied would act as a tempting bait, and then (quite innocently, mind you) I should suggest, "Do you feel inclined for a start to so-and-so this afternoon? It is so lovely, and you have often talked of going there." At first you would demur, and throw cold water on the project; but I should just play with my radishes, and give you time. After lunch you would emerge from your study with, it is true, the cloud on your brow still, only ever so little loosened, and a county map in your hand. You would lay on my shoulders (which would uncomplainingly bear it) the desire for a trip, and would ungraciously assent to it. Then the train should take us some ten miles away, and turn us loose into new ground: and we would sometimes walk briskly, and sometimes saunter, and sometimes pause: the mind would, spite of itself, be called away from its brooding contemplation of the one cloud, and would be attracted to allow the existence of the wide quiet blue about it: new objects or new combinations would be presented to the eye, which would call the mind, at first listless, but presently interested, up to its window, until its dark hour would retire like a mist from a mountain's brow, and (to your own surprise, if you thought of it) you would before the third mile be chatting eagerly, if not merrily; or, maybe, quietly enjoying scene, air, exercise, while I talked for both. And when you came home to dinner, your wife (too wise to notice the fact to you) would perceive the difference in step, voice, look, appetite. Such a panacea is a walk, for many of the vexations that flesh is heir to.

So Tennyson's moody man found it, when the angel-voice having prevailed over the devil-voice in that great controversy in his heart, he pulled his hat over his perplexed brow, and passed through his garden across the fields and into the wood.

"Forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wondered at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers;
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wondered while I paced along:
The woods were filled so full with song,
There seemed no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

I shall fill up this somewhat desultory and introductory paper with a few flying notes on certain species contained under the genus "*walk*."

There is the *walk on business*. If the business be

not very anxious or exigent, you may find an enjoyment in the walk itself, in such a case as this. But maybe you are walking like the Pilgrim with the burden on his back. There is a distress that makes your tread heavy; there is a dread that would fain retard it, there is a fierce need that spurs it on. You left your wife ill, suddenly ill; it is five o'clock on a bleak March morning; cold, dark, dismal; you turned a troubled look on the blank lifeless house, in one window of which a dim light yellowed the blind; and with the wondering dog, which you had loosed for company, cowering by your side, you start across the blank black down. Two miles and a half, and you press on absorbed in your own thoughts, and your eyes, which must mechanically be busy, cannot summon your mind to the window. So it is not at the time that you notice, but afterwards, that there come back to you the little incidents of the walk. How the sharp wind blew the stars out above you, and never would let all the seven of the Great Bear appear at once; how the moon looked out once or twice at you over the edge of a ragged black cloud; and, deciding that one traveller did not make daylight, went contentedly back to bed again. How when you passed that lamp that had been glaring in your eyes, your shadow suddenly wheeled round you, like a weird thing, and shot ahead of your advance with ghostly silence and dark extension. How you caught it up and passed it, and at the next chance it slid round again and grew rapidly into the shadow of a giant, as your quick steps left the lamp. How you waited at the doctor's house, seeing, but not then noticing, the mysterious masses of the evergreens, and the broken light that touched them here and there. How a head appeared—after divers ringings and considerable commotion it appeared, in a top-room—and how long you seemed to have to wait until the doctor, in scarlet dressing-gown, came down to undo the bolts and bars. How, the case stated to him, you preferred not to wait while he dressed, and the carriage was got ready, but hastened off home again, with legs relieved at being allowed to do something instead of standing still. And how, as you neared home, a greyer dulness began to break the dark, and a blank twilight gained strength as you went on, and another passenger here and there met or fell behind you; and a waggon rumbled or a cart rattled along the hard noisy road; and, when you had reached the house again, it stood blank and white and distinct now in the cheerless dawn; oppressively silent and lifeless, with its eyelids closed. Below, the shutters up—above, the blinds down—and the one lit blind sickly and faded in the growing light. And, with a sharp fear at the heart, from the house's death-like face, you turned the sullen lock, and darted up-stairs. And there was the warm bed, and the pale smiling invalid, so you thanked God, and took courage.

But all these little incidents of the walk, which the mind had indeed passively but not actively taken in, came back with the freshness of an exact picture, at different times, and long after that dreary and anxious expedition was a thing of the past. So even the walk in which the mind was preoccupied and absorbed from any regard to its incidents or its characteristics, will come in afterwards to add some pictures to the mental portfolio.

The *walk for pleasure* is, however, more to our present purpose, and this is not generally taken at five o'clock in a March morning. Not but that an early

start in the dark, to see the sun rise over some grand scenery, may be one of the most delightful excursions that we can make. There is a zest about such a walk, from the newness of the sensation, from the strangeness of scenery, which would appear familiar enough in the common daylight; from the sense of being beforehand with the rest of the world; from the delight which is the greatest of our mundane delights—that of anticipation. The wonderful capacity that we have of picturing glories, that after all are seldom as glorious as we expected, seems to me to augur great things for that land whose realities shall surpass our anticipations. "Neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." And yet some poet-minds have, even here, some passing sweet dreams of beauty and glory to which our present realities rarely attain.

But the walk for pleasure is (if the mind and body be all right) delightful at all seasons and at all hours,

"Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the high thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eve-drops fall,
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet moon."

This class of walk may be separated into two subdivisions. There is the walk, ordinarily called a *constitutional*, which has no end in view beyond the mere healthy exercise which is to be had from the act of walking. Such walks are, however, generally uninteresting and depressing. You have been sitting, you well know, too long in the house, for several days in the house, and you mean to stay in, this quiet afternoon also, to finish that book, or to write the last pages of that paper. The pen is nibbed, the sheets laid ready, the train of thought just starting. When in comes a friend, one whom it will not do to refuse, to advise a walk. And your consciousness is on the side of his arguments: you know that the wheels of being require to be wound up by that undesired spin in the caller air; and reluctantly, grudgingly, you close the desk and lay aside the ready pen, and button your coat, and sally forth for the duty-trudge. But you are speculating all the while upon what shortest limit will satisfy the claims of duty; and at the first chance you gladly wheel round again, and as soon as possible are at the brain work. Well, such a walk has not done you much good; still a certain amount of fresh air has entered the lungs, and a certain amount of exercise has set the blood spinning and the muscles in movement, and this was better than sitting at home. But the mind is not much refreshed, having been on the fret all the while you were out. The walk indeed that is only undertaken, and unwillingly perhaps undertaken, on the score of health, is hardly to be classed as a walk for pleasure. Let it stand labelled as the *duty-walk*.

The walk with an end, a pleasurable end beyond itself; the walk not undertaken for the mere mechanical exercise of walking, is that which is rightly to be called the walk for pleasure. It may be to botanise: only then you peer into the hedges too much for the enjoyment of the walk; it may be because of the beauty of the walk itself; it may be because of some choice view at the end of it, or even some church or some grey ruin to be seen; it may be that some friend, far enough away to make a visit to his homestead an event, has to be visited.

There is the *scamper* for winter along the hard

road, or after a stuffy day indoors: there is the *saunter* for summer, or among orchards, meadowlands, copses, and cornfields. There is the *town-walk*, with the fascinating scenery (to the country dweller) of the shop-windows; with the even pavement, the excitement, the bustle, the throng, and the noise. And this has its great enjoyment, if it be the exception, not the day-by-day rule. Then it becomes sickening and wearisome, and you get to hate the familiar turn down the Haymarket, or Waterloo Place, from Piccadilly, and the long straight Strand, and heavy Temple Bar, and noisy Ludgate Hill, and quiet Paternoster Row, and gay Cheapside, and sober King William Street, and London Bridge, with the dust flying; and the wearisome look of the booking-office, with always the same business faces of city men who live in the country, pouring in or out. Then a great craving comes over you for the country.

"O! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet!"

For there are other tired and heartsick workers beside the poor sempstress: *e.g.*, insurance clerks, with only three weeks holiday out of the long treadmill year.

A yearning comes over you for the country, and for a series of strolls therein. Well, that is just the mood in which I am pleased to have found you. I would waft you there, if I could, from the grimy office to the summit of Ben Nevis or to the large-timbered Dean Forest. But this I cannot do. I can only invite you to shoulder an imaginary knapsack, and to walk beside me (the more the better, you will not be in my way) while I mentally retrace and recall, so far as may be, the sensations and the scenery of pleasant walks, and branch off, according to my wont, into divers associations, and by-paths of thought, grave now, and anon light and gay.

HOLBORN VALLEY IMPROVEMENTS.

In no part of London was "improvement" more urgently needed than in the Holborn Valley region. At all seasons of the year, and especially in winter, the steep declivities of Holborn Hill and Snow Hill were troublesome, and sometimes perilous. The lowering of the slope of Holborn Hill in 1842, from one in sixteen to one in twenty-three, caused a very perceptible saving of animal labour and suffering, not to speak of human toil, temper, and time. Thirty years ago the annual amount of traffic between Fetter Lane and the Old Bailey was estimated as follows:—20,000,000 pedestrians, 871,600 equestrians, 157,750 hackney coaches, 373,000 carts and waggons, 79,000 stages, 83,000 carriages, 136,000 omnibuses, 460,000 chaises and taxed carts, and 355,000 cabs. Since that time the amount of traffic has immensely increased. If hackney coaches have disappeared, omnibuses and other conveyances have multiplied. At various times proposals have been made to bridge the valley, but at length the inconvenience increased to an extent that compelled action on the part of the Corporation of London, and the magnificent works now in progress are the result.

It was not the physical configuration of the district which alone called for interference. No region of the metropolis more demanded improvement in a

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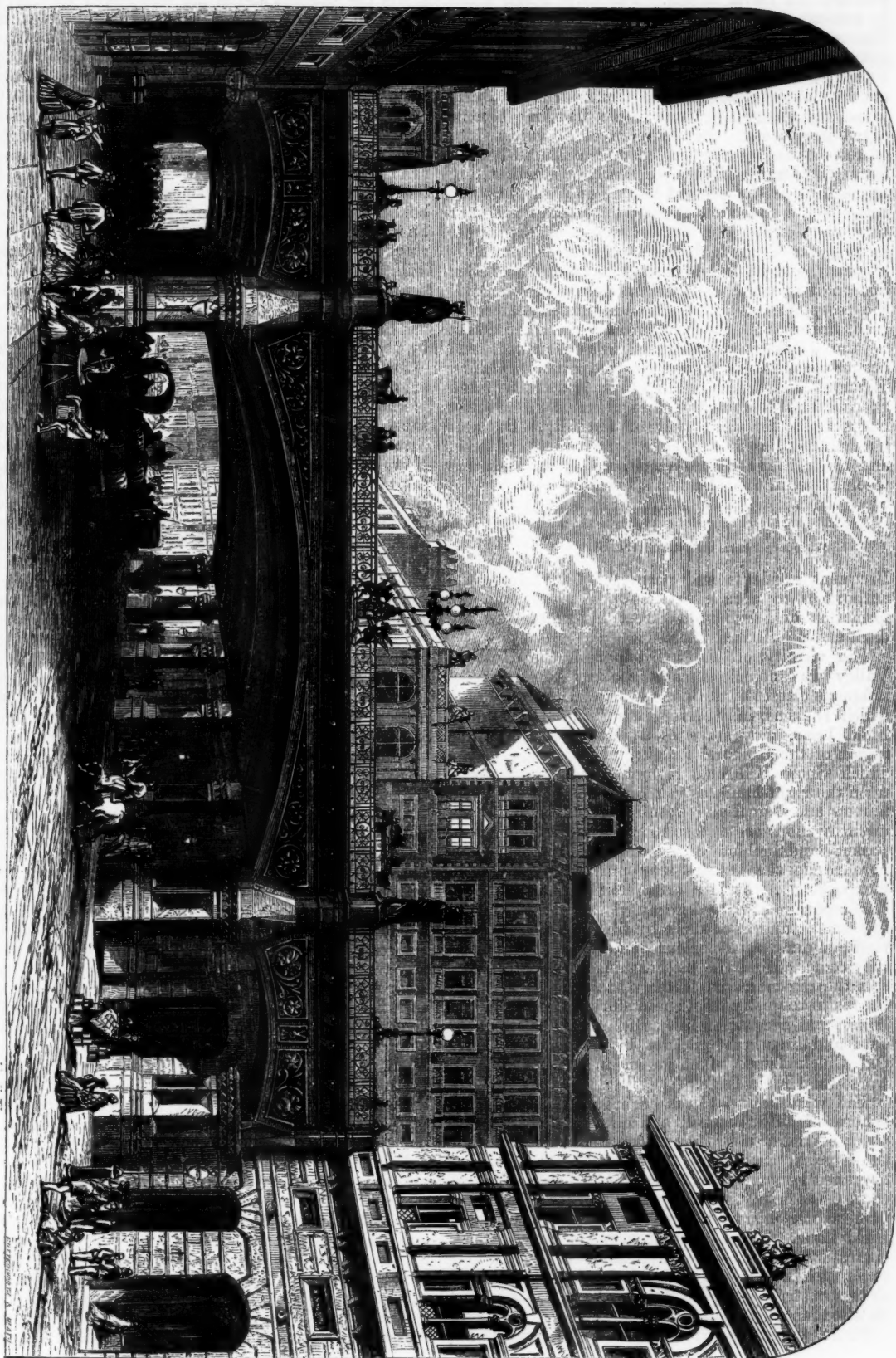
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THE HOLBORN VALLEY VIADUCT: BRIDGE OVER FARRINGTON STREET. (From the architect's design.)



sanitary and moral aspect. The River Fleet, which in ancient times ran from Hampstead to join the Thames, had for centuries degenerated into a filthy sewer, familiarly known as the Fleet Ditch. At Farringdon Street, where the viaduct is now forming, another ancient stream, the Old Bourne or Burn, joined the Fleet River; and it, too, had long become a tributary sewer. In the reign of Edward I ships of respectable tonnage sailed up the Fleet River as far as Old Bourne Bridge. An anchor has been dug up as high as the present Bagnigge Wells, and the remains of a ship, from the bed of the old river, near Camden Town. But as the water in the upper sources was diminished, the ditch became gradually stagnant, and in the days of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson it was a *cloaca maxima*, open and offensive, the receptacle of all horrible nuisances. After the great fire of 1666, the ditch, from Farringdon Street to the Thames, was cleansed and deepened, and barges ascended as formerly to the Holborn Valley. Wharves and landing-places were constructed, and Seacoal and Newcastle Lanes resumed their busy barge traffic for the supply of the City. But this "new canal," as it was called, proved unprofitable, and again relapsed into a noisome sewer, as it was when Pope, in the "Dunciad," points—

"To where Fleet Ditch, with disemboing streams,
Rolls the large tribute of dead dogs to Thames;
The king of dykes, than whom no slime of mud
With deeper sable blots the silver flood."

Frequent accidents and perpetual fever drove the authorities to arch over the open sewer, and the formation of Farringdon Street hid from view the dark and pestilential ditch.

The vicinity of Fleet Ditch and the Holborn Valley was notorious as a rookery of the most infamous classes of the population. The description which Dickens, in "Oliver Twist," in 1837, gave of Field Lane, may serve as a picture of the whole region of the Holborn Valley: "Near to the spot on which Snow Hill and Holborn meet, there opens upon the right hand, as you come out of the City, a narrow and dismal alley leading to Saffron Hill. In its filthy shops are exposed for sale huge bunches of pocket-handkerchiefs of all sizes and patterns—for here reside the traders who purchase them from pickpockets. . . It is a commercial colony of itself, the emporium of petty larceny, visited at early morning and setting in of dusk by silent merchants, who traffic in dark back-parlours, and go as strangely as they come. Here the clothesman, the shoe-vamper, and the rag-merchant, display their goods as sign-boards to the petty thief; and stores of old iron and bones, and heaps of mildewy fragments of woollen-stuff and linen, rust and rot in the grimy cellars." Old Chick Lane, taken down in 1844, was even worse than Field Lane.

The whole district was enshrouded in an atmosphere of filth, disease, and crime. Never, truly, was the hand of improvement more required, both for the physical and moral elevation of any haunts of degraded humanity. The mark of Christian beneficence is seen in the refuges and schools which now give nobler historical association to the name of Field Lane. The City improvements have already changed the sanitary and physical aspect of the whole region, and now at length the work is being completed in the construction of the Holborn Valley Viaduct and its attendant alterations.

These extensive works are being carried out

under the auspices and at the sole cost of the Corporation of London. Some general notion of their nature and extent may be formed when it is stated that they are estimated to cost about £1,500,000, but of that sum the Corporation expect to recoup themselves to the amount of from £500,000 to £600,000 or £700,000 by the sale of land for building purposes on either side of the new thoroughfare and of the radiating streets which are being formed in connection with it. For the purposes of this great public improvement the whole of the houses and shops on the south side of Skinner Street, Snow Hill, extending from the Old Bailey to Farringdon Street, and thence to the summit of Holborn Hill, have been taken down, while those on the northern side, throughout the whole of that distance, are in process of demolition, and the Corporation has had, and will still have, to pay enormous sums by way of compensation to the owners and occupiers—for example, in one case the compensation awarded amounted to about £30,000.

The works now in progress consist of a stately and substantial viaduct across the Holborn Valley, between Hatton Garden and the western end of Newgate Street, and two side streets connecting the upper with the lower or Farringdon Street level. Both of these side streets are on the north side of the present line of Holborn and Skinner Street, Snow Hill. By an Act of Parliament power is given to the Corporation to make a new street from a part of Holborn Hill opposite Hatton Garden, and passing thence by the back of St. Andrew's Church into Shoe Lane, which will be widened as far as Stonecutter Street. Thence a new line of street, fifty feet wide and with easy gradients, will be formed to the eastern end of Fleet Street, near to its junction with Farringdon Street. The viaduct across Holborn Valley will be eighty feet wide, and will commence at the western end of Newgate Street, from which it will be carried in a straight line to the farther side of Farringdon Street, occupying nearly the whole of the space which now or recently formed Skinner Street, as well as a large portion of the sites of the houses on that line of thoroughfare. It will also include a part of the churchyard of St. Sepulchre at the top of Snow Hill. From Farringdon Street, westward, it will be carried by a gentle curve to the end of Hatton Garden, occupying the sites of the houses which formerly stood on the southern side of Holborn Hill, the largest part of the present roadway there, and a portion of the churchyard of St. Andrew's, Holborn. From Newgate Street to the entrance of St. Sepulchre's Church the gradient will be so easy as to be hardly perceptible, and at that point the Eastern Approach Street from Farringdon Road will join the viaduct on its northern side. From St. Sepulchre's Church to Farringdon Street the gradient will be one in 153, and from Farringdon Street to Hatton Garden one in 143. For all purposes of traffic the viaduct may be said to be level.

Farringdon Street is being crossed by a cast-iron bridge of an ornamental character, consisting of a centre and two side arches, supported by piers of polished granite. At each corner of the bridge there will be flights of steps for foot passengers to pass between the upper and the lower levels. They will be well lighted and ventilated, and the space beneath will be disposed in shops and warehouses, while the floors above will be eligible for offices or for general commercial purposes. An attempt has been made to

give the bridge a more ornamental character than any other cast-iron structure in the metropolis. Beneath the footways of the viaduct on either side there will be commodious vaultage for the houses on each side of the roadway. Outside the vaults there will be a subway for the gas and water pipes, and over the space between each subway, forming the centre of the viaduct, the roadway will be carried on a series of arches. At the point next to Farringdon Street the footway vaults will be disposed in three tiers on each side of the road, and will gradually diminish, both eastwards and westwards, until at Hatton Garden and at Newgate Street there will be but one tier. The subways will be about 11½ feet high on an average by seven feet wide, and in Farringdon Street and Shoe Lane the connection between the pipes in the subways and the viaduct will be effected by means of a vertical shaft. The subways are being constructed of brick, except that part of them which passes over the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, which will be of iron. In each subway provision is made for water, gas, and telegraph pipes, all of which will be so placed that the joints can be inspected and repairs made without difficulty. The water-pipes, being the bulkiest and the heaviest of the three, will be borne on rests placed on the ground level, and the gas and telegraph pipes will be carried on cast-iron brackets. There is room for the pipes of two, three, or four telegraph companies side by side. The part of the subway nearest the carriage-way is reserved for persons who may have business there walking and moving about, and there will be a line of rails, with suitable carriages, by which materials of all kinds may be conveyed.

Shoe Lane, which at its northern end is now but fourteen feet wide at one spot, is to be made thirty feet wide, and the viaduct will be carried over it by a girder bridge. This lane is to be continued northwards with a width of thirty feet, until it emerges in an entirely new thoroughfare called the Western Approach Street, which will start by a junction with the viaduct at Hatton Garden, and proceed in a north-easterly direction to Farringdon Road. There the new street leading to Smithfield Market will commence, and the two streets will therefore form together one straight line of thoroughfare sixty feet wide, giving direct access to the new meat and poultry market now in course of erection by the Corporation on the site of ancient Smithfield, and to the north-east of London. This new street will be very commodious as far as it goes, but unfortunately it will lodge all the traffic in Long Lane, Barbican, and Chiswell Street. As a remedy, however, to that inconvenience, it is in contemplation to widen the whole of those thoroughfares to at least fifty feet or sixty feet. At the point in Holborn where Shoe Lane and the new Western Approach Street merge there will be a circus, partly for ornamentation, but much more for facilitating the traffic, which will always press more upon that part of the main thoroughfare than on any other.

The Eastern Approach Street will begin at Farringdon Road, about 130 feet north of the point where that thoroughfare will be crossed by the viaduct. It will be carried nearly parallel with the viaduct for some distance eastwards, and will join it with a gentle curve by the side of St. Sepulchre's Church. This street will form a junction with King Street, and will therefore give another line of access to the new market. The lower end of it will take

the place of the thoroughfare known as Snow Hill, the whole of which will be absorbed in its formation, or by the buildings to be erected on either side of it. The levels of Farringdon Street at a short distance south of the bridge will be altered. The street will be carried thence with a gradient of one in forty-five as far as West Street, and from that point northwards with a very slight inclination until it again falls into the present level of the road.

The works, of which this is a brief description, are being pushed forward with great energy, and probably in little more than a year hence the ordinary street traffic will be conveyed along the viaduct now in course of erection, though the whole improvement in all its parts can hardly be completed in less than two years from this time. The operations, from the nature of the ground, have been attended with great labour and unusual difficulty. The site also for a large portion being upon the bed of the old Fleet River, the excavations had to be carried down to a very great depth. The foundations, indeed, have been sunk in some places as low as thirty feet, and rarely less than twenty feet, below the level of Farringdon Street. Between three and four millions of bricks were buried before one showed itself above the surface of the ground, and altogether in the works between Hatton Garden and the Old Bailey between ten and eleven millions of bricks will be used. In addition to this some four or five millions more may be absorbed in the construction of the subways, vaults, and sewers.*

MUSSULMAN DIET;

OR, THE FOOD AND DRINK I MET WITH IN THE
MAHOMMEDAN EAST.

BY HERMANN VÁMBÉRY, AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN CENTRAL ASIA."

II.

THE Persians, although not quite so frugal in their diet as the Arabs, are, nevertheless, distinguished by their abstemiousness and the simplicity of their table. They must be classed among herbivorous nations, for among the higher classes meat is seldom eaten, and still more rarely among the lower. During certain months of the year, when fruit is in abundance, any fruit-tree or melon-bed suffices to provide the table of the Persian. *Pilau* and *tshilau* are his principal dishes. The former is usually prepared with dried fruit or some sort of vegetable; the latter, simply boiled in water, takes the place of bread, with light kinds of meat and puddings. In such cases he usually puts first his hand into the dish of rice, rolls up *ad libitum* a ball between his fingers, places a piece of meat on the top, and then throws it into his open mouth with a certain studied movement, which he has to learn according to the prescribed rules of elegance and grace. To the stranger this mode of eating proves at first one of immense difficulty, quite as great as the use of the Chinese chop-sticks, made of ivory, which usurp the functions of knife and fork. Although accustomed for many years to Turkish habits, my attempts in this respect were often extremely droll, and furnished a subject for general merriment. While the Persians ate three times, not once did I succeed in rolling the fat and greasy rice

* The whole of the works have been designed by Mr. William Haywood, the engineer and surveyor to the City Commissioners of Sewers. Messrs. Hill and Keddell are the contractors for the viaduct, one of the side streets, and the circus, and the whole of the bridge, excepting the iron work, which is being done by Messrs. Cochrane, Grove, and Co., of Woodside Iron Works, near Dudley.

into a compact ball; and when, after many efforts, I at last succeeded, and had managed, with much trouble, to get the small piece of meat on the top—for to use the left hand is an unheard-of piece of rudeness*—all would drop again upon carrying the hand to my mouth. To avoid becoming the butt of their raillery and laughter through my inexperience, at first I often suggested want of appetite, just when suffering the extremest hunger. Of the numerous meat-dishes I will only mention the following:—First, the *kebab* (roast meat), which is prepared just as tender as in Turkey; secondly, *sich kebab*, consisting of small pieces of meat, which are arranged, with pieces of fat alternately, upon a spit, and then roasted before a fierce fire; thirdly, *lule kebab*, a kind of mincemeat, mixed with spices and fried in fat. For a European stomach this dish is very indigestible, though its savour would recommend it to our taste. Puddings, strange to say, are almost entirely wanting at a Persian dinner. Vegetables are less numerous, and by no means so well prepared as in Turkey. The chief article of food continues to be rice, which is pleasanter to look at than the *pilau* in Turkey, but far inferior to the latter as regards its savour and digestive qualities.

In the manner of serving the dinner, moreover, a considerable difference is apparent. The Persian takes his food from off the floor; the tablecloth, generally oblong in shape, is always of a dark colour, and is not washed until the spots of dirt become unbearable to the nose. The edges, especially, become peculiarly unpleasant, as the guests use them after every meal to wipe their hands, mouth, and beard; although layers of meat and grease preserve traces of their having been used before repeatedly for the same purpose. It is a rare thing to receive at dinner a *satsbak*, a kind of loosely-woven towel; and this too is shared by the whole company for several days consecutively.

In Turkey the dishes are served singly and separately; at a Persian dinner they are brought in all at once. In houses where strict etiquette is observed, they must be partaken of one after the other; but where this is not the case, everyone takes *ad libitum* of the dish he prefers. The Persian sits squatted upon the soles of his feet, bending forward the upper part of the body, so as to form a sharpish angle. Generally only three sides of the tablecloth are occupied, the fourth being left free for the servants to handle the dishes with greater ease. The servants are plentiful in number, though not quite so numerous as at a Turkish dinner. On the whole, a Persian company at table presents a very interesting appearance, when seen at a distance or from a bird's-eye point of view. It forms the most primitive picture of eastern modes of eating, and one which, without borrowing anything of western refinement, is, upon the whole, free from the coarseness and indelicacy which so often offends the eye of a European in the less civilised nations of the East.

Central Asia and its adjoining deserts form, with respect to food, the *juste milieu*, so to speak, between the northern and southern zones of Asia; for while the settled portion of its population feed on vegetables, as well as meat and farinaceous compounds, we find that with the nomads milk and meat are

their sole, exclusive diet. As to quality, we observe that the articles of food in Central Asia resemble in many points those common in Europe; the only essential difference consisting, as we may well understand, in the method of preparation. The inhabitant of Turkestan, to whatever class he may belong, enjoys twice a day his *pilau*, which, however, is not a light dish of rice, as in Persia and Turkey, but rather a mixture of meat and vegetables. This latter dish, called *ash* in its native country, may justly be designated the king of *pilau*s. It is the most savoury of any preparations of its kind, and is in unity with the Tartar's ideas of life and comfort, who, instead of boiling rice, vegetables, and meat separately, and eating each of these by itself, prepares all together in the same vessel, and consumes them collectively in a mass.

The *pilau*, if I am not mistaken, comes originally from Central Asia. The Affghans, who next introduced it, call it *azbeg*; the Persians, who learnt its preparation from the Affghans, call it *kabuli*; and although the western Asiatics, especially the Turks and Arabs, were most probably long since in possession of this peculiar preparation of rice, still there is no doubt that the present name of *pilau*, in the last syllable of which we distinctly recognise the Persian "*ab*" (water), is of purely Iranic origin. It is characteristic of Central Asiatics, that their diet is not only coarser, more substantial, and more indigestible than that of the more southern nations of Asia, but even more so than any imaginable dish in European cookery. To see the food they eat swimming in fat, is to them the height of enjoyment; and we must add to this the well-known toughness of much of their meat, such as the flesh of camels and horses, and the primitive mode of preparing their food. Mutton of the very best quality is found in Central Asia; I venture even to think that its excellence diminishes the farther we go westward. Persian mutton is already inferior to that of Central Asia, and Turkish mutton, again, to that of Persia (although that species of sheep, which the Osmanlis call *Karaman* and *Kibirdshik*, does not by any means deserve their excessive praise), so that at last, when we reach Europe, with the exception perhaps of England, mutton has justly ceased to be regarded as a delicacy. The sheep of Central Asia, from Lake Aral to the province of Shen-Si in China, belong throughout to the fat-tailed species; and not only is the fat far more digestible and full of flavour than would ordinarily be expected, but I have found the meat itself so tender and excellent, that I have never met with any in Europe to compare with it.

The abundance and variety of dishes in Central Asia is far inferior to those at a Persian dinner-table, and can bear no comparison at all to the Turkish. The Central Asiatic has generally one dish, rarely two; and only on extraordinary occasions three or more are to be seen. Nor can we wonder at this scarcity. As in Persia, on the arrival of a guest, the *kalian* (water-pipe) and tea are handed to him, and in Turkey, coffee and pipes, so in Central Asia a cloth is spread before him, laden with bread and fruits, and, should he remain longer in the house, a dish of rice. Since, therefore, the master of the house and his belongings are obliged to eat heartily, in order not to put the guest to shame, we may easily understand that, after several visits in the course of one day, he has no particular appetite for his regular meals. The same effect is produced by the custom of being obliged to sit down by the side of a friend or

* The left hand is used for certain bodily ablutions, when the Mahomedans use water instead of paper, which is considered by them a sacred thing, the Koran being written upon it.

acquaintance who happens to be eating or drinking, whether one meets him in the bazaar or in the public road. It would be a great affront not to accept the proffered food; just as, on the other hand, it would be a proof of ill-feeling or incivility if no such invitation were given.

Although bordering so closely on China, where the greatest variety of dishes prevails, nevertheless, as Islamitic Central Asia has comparatively little intercourse with the "flowery land" of Buddhism, the former has preserved in its diet a remarkable simplicity. The one customary dish, generally of great size and depth, is filled to the brim; all begin at once eating heartily; and not only would it be contrary to the rules of propriety, but would be regarded by the host as an insult, if his guests were to rise from the table without having eaten the very last morsel in the dish.

That my readers may not accuse me of paucity of terms, I will mention some of the different varieties of dishes. Our gastronomers, our noble "knights of the table," whose fastidiousness makes them turn from the sight of the richly-filled *menu* of a "Trois Frères Provençaux," or a "Vefour," might perhaps find a tit-bit in my list. First in rank comes the *ash*, already mentioned; then follows generally *börek*, a broth with dumplings, which are stuffed with minced meat and spices. This dish may be looked upon as "the soup," but it is very suitable to form the whole contents of a dinner, being served and consumed in such large quantities. The Osmanlis have named it *Tatar börek*. Next follows *sheölé*, a porridge of rice with meat and dried fruit; fourthly, *bulamuk*, prepared simply of flour, water, and fat: fifthly, *mestava*, which consists of rice boiled in sour milk, a dish for the summer, the preceding one being generally eaten in winter. Besides these, there are the following preparations: *Jarma*, bruised corn soaked in milk; *gödshe*, a kind of porridge, formed of the husks of the *sorghum* and *masharva*, groats, which are regularly eaten with fat, and occasionally with oil; and various other ingredients. These dishes are eaten in the winter without any addition, but in the summer we rarely see a Tartar finish his dinner without some kind of fruit. No one will feel surprised at the absence of refinement and etiquette at the tables of Central Asiatic families. If a European experiences disgust at this in Turkey, he will feel doubly disgusted in Persia, and vastly more so here. The cloth and furniture of the table—I say furniture, but I mean by it merely one large wooden or earthenware dish—are even less luxurious and less clean than in Iran, although there, according to ancient custom, they use the large Chinese dishes. As soon as "Bismila" is said, the strong, bony fists are plunged at once into the dish with a truly Tartar impetuosity. In Iran the customary little ball is prepared neatly with the tips of the fingers; here it is done with the whole hand: there they let the fat drop back into the dish; here every one sucks up the grease that drips from between the fingers of the closed fist; and if they wish to be particularly friendly towards any one, they hold out their hand to him for that purpose as a sign of politeness. I could not easily describe what I felt, in spite of my gradual weaning from European habits, when I had to lick the thick rancid fat from the hollow of a Tartar's dirty palm, for it was impossible to commit the incivility of declining it. In Iran they wipe their hands at all events on a dirty

towel; here they use instead their own beards. Without entering into any more particulars, I will only add that the mode of eating in Turkestan is the most primitive of any in the whole of Asia.

In conclusion I will make a few remarks about the bread, which throughout Asia, so far as I am acquainted with that continent, has preserved the primitive form, of which mention is made in the Biblical age, and which has been perpetuated to this day in the Easter-cakes of the Jews. In Constantinople and some of the towns on the Mediterranean a traveller is likely to meet with certain kinds of bread which remind him of that common in Europe. The reason of this lies in the introduction of Greek customs. But in the interior of Anatolia we see everywhere, instead of loaves, pieces of dough in the shape of thin cakes, which from here eastwards as far as China are distinguished by different degrees of length, breadth, and thickness. In the north of Anatolia a thick kind of bread, called *lavash*, is very popular, which, when prepared with good wheat, somewhat resembles our own. In Persia, however, the dough is drawn out very thin and long, and then baked upon pebbles in a hot oven, both of which processes together occupy scarcely more than half an hour. To see a Persian return home from the bazaar with his long, thin piece of bread, is for any stranger a somewhat comical sight, and reminded me vividly of the German Baron W—, at Tiflis, who took one day four or five of such pieces to a tailor to have a coat made of this material. On the other hand, this shape has its peculiar advantages for the natives. The piece of bread serves as tablecloth, dinner-napkin, and plate; nay, you often see the dinner of several persons carried home upon it from the bazaar. As quickly as it is baked, so quickly it must also be eaten, and, I feel inclined to add, so quickly does it satisfy the appetite, and so soon does hunger return. Throughout Persia I have chiefly met with this kind of bread, called *nani sengek*; in villages, however, the above-mentioned sort, *lavash*, is mostly used in households. I must confess that, travelling in the disguise I did, I felt more than anything the want of European bread, in the civilised as well as the uncivilised parts of Asia. Travellers provided with European pomp and luxury have generally some substitute invented for them by their servants; but I found it a great hardship to be obliged, even during my travels in Persia, to eat the primitive dough, kneaded by the dirty hands of a stinking camel-driver, and baked upon a hot bar of iron. However, I fared much worse afterwards even than this, in the desert between Persia and Khiva. What an enormous difference between the productions of our fancy-bread bakers, and that which I prepared for myself in the great desert of Central Asia! It was especially during the second half of our road to Khiva that this reflection forced itself upon my mind. The camel-dung which was to furnish fuel for baking bread, had to be carried in one's bosom, to keep it sufficiently dry. I used to put one piece upon the other with the most painful economy, and the small fireplace was hedged in and guarded as if I were going to burn gold. The dough, after having been kneaded with salt water, impregnated, of course, with a strong dose of sand, was divided into large pieces and put into the hot ashes. If favoured by fate, the tough substance would be well baked, and in this state resembled a stone rather than bread; but if haste or the fear of robbers shortened our halt, then

the dirty black dough had to be snatched out of the ashes half baked, when hunger scarcely allowed time to clean it from the cinders that stuck to it. In order to give my readers an idea of the taste of such food, I must mention that even my camel one day very unceivably declined my offer, when I attempted to share with him half my morning meal of this kind. When travellers are eating, these animals usually look round, attracted by the movement of the jaws. I put, one day, at such an opportunity, a piece of this particular bread into his mouth, and the animal, more refined than myself, spat it out.

At Khiva I could soon make up for the privation I had suffered as to bread. There, in consequence of the superiority of the native wheat, a tolerably good bread is baked incomparably better than in Persia. Bokhara, finally, enjoys so high a reputation for its bread, of which four different sorts are sold in all the bazaars, that her bakers, not only in Central Asia, but in Chinese Tartary, and even in China itself, are sure to turn their handicraft to good account.

VARIATIONS OF MODERN CHRONOLOGY.

HAVING been lately employed on a work for which I have often had to refer to books of dates and chronological facts, I have been surprised at the many variations of time given for the same events. For several hundred years attempts have been made to keep faithful records of all important occurrences, yet previous to the establishment of daily papers, eager for news and recording every trifling event, there is nothing strange in occasionally seeing accounts of the same affair differing a few days in time.

Many, however, will be surprised to learn that there is nearly as much uncertainty as to the date of many events that have occurred within the period of a century as with those which transpired two or three hundred years ago. I cannot in this brief article give a long list of such conflicting statements, but a few will suffice. And I will take the dates of events that have occurred since the change from the old to the new style, in 1752.

The capture of Quebec by General Wolfe was certainly an important event in the world's history. It was the overthrow of the French power, and the establishment of the English, in a large country now containing more than three millions of energetic and intelligent people. One would suppose that chronologists could agree on the date of an event of so much importance; but they do not. I have seen four different dates given as the day, and there are undoubtedly, either in the French or English language, two or three more. From "Haydn's Dictionary of Dates," I learn that Quebec was captured, and Wolfe killed, on the 13th of September, 1759. This is also the date given by Hume. In "Ashburton's History of England," it is stated that "Wolfe was killed in the moment of victory on the 14th of September." From "Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information" we learn that the battle was fought on the 17th of September. The inhabitants of Westerham, in Kent, where Wolfe was born, placed in the parish church a marble tablet bearing these words:—"James, son of Colonel Edward Wolfe and Henriette his wife, was born in this parish January 2nd, 1726; and died in America, September 19th, 1759, Conqueror of Quebec."

Haydn appears to have adopted the date used by the majority of chronologists, yet it is difficult to understand how the relatives and friends of Wolfe should have been deceived as to the true date of his death.

After a siege of more than six weeks, the English captured the city of Havannah, in Cuba. On what day did this important event occur? I have seen a Spanish-American account, in which it is stated to have happened on the 10th of August, 1762. W. Toone, the chronologist, author of "The Chronological Historian," etc., says in his "Chronological Record of the Reign of George the Third," that Havannah was captured by the English on the 12th day of August, 1762. Ashburton, in his "History of England," states that a treaty for capitulation was made on the 13th, and that the English took possession on the 14th of August. The latter date is the one which is given for that event by the "Annual Register" for the year 1762, and also by Hume.

In "Cassell's Illustrated Almanack for 1867," a work apparently got up with some care, it is stated that Reginald Heber died on the 1st of April, 1826. I have seen it stated in another almanack that Bishop Heber died in Calcutta on the 3rd of September, 1826. In the "Annual Register," the date is undoubtedly correctly given. It states that Bishop Heber was found dead in a bath at Trichinopoly, on the 3rd of April, 1826. This is also the date given by Toone.

In "Tegg's Dictionary of Chronology," a work generally supposed to be trustworthy, I have noticed several dates conflicting with those of other works. One of them I remember to be the capture of Fort Niagara by the English, which was stated to have happened in December, 1819—four years after the close of the last war with America, and six years after the event really happened!

In a biographical work, entitled the "Georgian Era," the celebrated George Whitfield is stated to have died in September, 1770. Toone places his death in October.

Chronologists and biographers give a difference of one day in the date of the death of nearly half the eminent persons of whom they write. This is the case even with many who have died within the last few years, but this difference of time is easily accounted for in some instances, as in the death of Thackeray, who retired to rest on the night of the 13th of December, 1863, and was found dead on the morning of the 14th, both days being now given as the date of his death. Lord Macaulay, Sir Humphry Davy, Washington Irving, and Sir William Jones, are examples of this slight difference given as to the date of their respective departures.

Having found some amusement in satisfying my curiosity on many of these little differences by consulting the most "reliable" authorities, the reader may not think I am straying from my subject in stating the result as to some of the persons mentioned. Sir Humphry Davy died on the 29th of May, 1829; Washington Irving on the 26th of November, 1859; and Lord Macaulay on the 28th of December, 1859. Any other dates ascribed to these events are undoubtedly wrong.

I have seen the 24th of October, 1864, given as the date of so recent an event as the death of John Leech, the celebrated artist, an event that, according to the "Annual Register," happened four days later. Both of these dates may be wrong.

I have read as an event of history that General Lopez, ex-Governor-General of Cuba, was garrotted, and that fifty American "fillibusters" were shot in the Plaza at Havannah, on the 1st of May, 1851. The two events, it so happens, did not occur on the same day, and Lopez was executed September 1st, 1851.

The events put in many of the common almanacks got up as mediums for advertising, seem shuffled into the calendar anyhow. There are a few stock dates, such as the battle of Waterloo, and the execution of Admiral Byng, on which they all agree, but when they attempt to record anything else, there is but little certainty of the date being correct.

I have amused myself by comparing the calendars of several of them with each other, and in doing so have found four different dates given for the death of Daniel O'Connell, varying from the 13th to the 19th of May, 1847; the 15th being by the best authority the correct date—that being the one given by the "Annual Register."

For every event that happens there are hundreds of editors and their reporters waiting with pens in hand to record and publish it to the world with true and minute particulars. They are abundantly supplied with the latest news from everywhere, for they have telegraphs, steamboats, pigeons, and "pony expresses" working for them, yet they do not agree as to time. Had the battle of Waterloo no more to do with the fate of nations than the first battle of Bull's Run, during the civil war in America, then we should see two or three dates given for that event, as there is now of the day of the great Federal panic.

Had Shakespeare not been England's greatest poet, then we should see two or more different dates given for the day of his death, as is the case with Daniel O'Connell, and others I have mentioned. For all important events a day will sometimes be assigned and be generally accepted as the true one, but there will ever be plenty of room for harbouring a doubt as to it being correct.

To give but one other instance, the date and the place of the birth of so distinguished a personage as the late Lord Brougham, are given with perplexing variation. It is generally stated that Henry Brougham was born on the 19th September, 1779, in a house in St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh. A pathetic tale is told of his lordship going to the house on his last visit to Edinburgh, and shedding tears in the room where he first saw the light. Now I find a writer in the "Weekly Review" thus commenting on this popularly received statement, as made in all the guide-books and biographies. "It is desirable," this writer says, "to have something more precise to go upon than the recollection of a single individual had of a casual statement. The necessary corroboration is furnished by the registry of births preserved in the Register-house. Mr. Seton and his assistants are ever most obliging and helpful to any one who makes inquiries for a literary purpose, and take the trouble of search in such cases without exacting the legally-prescribed fee. Through the kindness of these gentlemen I have obtained a copy of the entry of birth, which is in the following terms:—

"Wednesday, 30th September, 1778.

"Henry Brougham, Esq., parish of St. Giles (sic) and Eleonora Syme, his spouse, a son born the 19th current, named Henry Peter. Witnesses: Mr. Archibald Hope, Royal Bank, and the Rev. Principal Robertson."

It will be seen that this entry disposes conclusively of the notion that Lord Brougham was born in St. Andrew Square. No part of the New Town was ever included in the parish of St. Giles. The parishes into which the New Town is now divided were taken off St. Cuthbert's and South Leith, previous to the extension of the royalty beyond the Nor' Loch. Lord Brougham's father undoubtedly lived in No. 21, St. Andrew Square shortly after the birth of his famous son—possibly in the very year of the birth. And afterwards he removed to No. 7, George Street, in which house also one authority alleges the birth of Lord Brougham to have taken place. But it is inconceivable that a birth which took place in either of these houses should be registered in St. Giles' parish. On the other hand, No. 8, Cowgate, was, in the year referred to, included in the parish of St. Giles; it is only within the last thirty years that it has been taken into the new parish of St. John's. This entry corrects another mistake which is found in all the published biographies of Lord Brougham. He is universally represented as having been born on the 19th of September, 1779, whereas it clearly appears from the above excerpt, and from the place which it occupies in the registrar's record, that the true date of birth is the 19th of September, 1778.

It is curious his lordship should have so early dropped the second member of his Christian name,—if, indeed, he ever used it. It may also be interesting to read a transcript of the marriage of Lord Brougham's father and mother as registered. The entry is as follows:—"May 22nd, 1778. Henry Brougham, Esq., yr. of Brougham Hall, in the county of Cumberland, and Eleonora Syme, Old Greyfriars parish, daughter of the deceased Mr. James Syme, late minister at Alloa." There is a story that Lord Brougham's father lived for some time in the house of his mother-in-law, after his marriage, and that the house in No. 8, Cowgate, was the house of Mrs. Syme. There is nothing but tradition to support this account, so far as I am aware; but the entry of the marriage can hardly be said to contradict it, at all events. Old Greyfriars parish marched with what was St. Giles', and now is St. John's, through the middle of the Cowgate. And we know, as matter of fact, that the registrars of old—though they could not make such a mistake as to suppose St. Andrew Square to be in St. Giles' parish—were not so particular as to refuse to register a birth or marriage when it occurred in a street part of which belonged to their jurisdiction.

These few examples may serve to illustrate the title of my paper. If such difficulties exist in the simple art of chronology, we need not be surprised at the "variations of modern history." If writers are so apt to go wrong about *dates*, what are we to expect in their records of what they call *facts*? The uncertainty of history is well illustrated by the following anecdote. When James II and his wife Mary of Modena were in exile at St. Germain's, he related to some one present an incident that had occurred in England shortly before. Mary corrected him and said, "No, it was *so*." He replied, "I was an eye-witness." "So was I!" she said. She persisted, so did he; but suddenly ceasing, he cried, "Alas, for history! Who shall put faith in it, when a fact of which we were both recent eye-witnesses, and which neither has any interest in misrepresenting, is thus disputed by us."

Varieties.

SCHOOLMASTERS ON THE EPISCOPAL BENCH.—Dr. Tait, Bishop of London, now Archbishop of Canterbury, was head-master of Rugby. Dr. Jackson, his successor in the see of London, began his public life as head-master of the Islington Proprietary School. The vacancy caused by Dr. Jackson's promotion from Lincoln is filled by Canon Wordsworth, formerly head-master of Harrow. The "Times," commenting upon these changes, says: "It is curious what a run there is upon schoolmasters for ecclesiastical dignities. Two successive head-masters of Harrow will now have attained the honours of the bench; and the sees of Canterbury, London, and Lincoln will each have been occupied by two schoolmasters in succession. It may be that the duties of a head-master induce in a man a habitual solemnity, which it is difficult to acquire without a special training, but which is an essential qualification in a bishop. Always to wear an unnatural dress, and always to look grave and virtuous, are inflictions imposed upon no other classes of mankind than English schoolmasters and bishops, and it is perhaps not surprising that the two classes should become so closely connected."

NURSES FOR THE SICK POOR.—A large amount of sickness and consequent pauperism might be mitigated and prevented if the medical man were adequately supported in his efforts by the presence of proper nurses. It is not too much to say that in many cases the nurse is more necessary than the doctor, and if it be right that local or central governments should provide medical relief for the poor, it follows that to render that relief thoroughly efficient, and to prevent a waste of labour, time, and money, they are equally bound to see that the nurse watches over the patient as the doctor prescribes for him or sends him his physic.—*Dr. Sieveking.*

THE NEW CHEER.—The inaugural address of Dr. M'Cosh (late of Belfast), the new President of Princeton College, New Jersey, occupied nearly two hours in its delivery, but the interest of its subject matter, the vigour and terseness of its language, its practical common sense, the numerous happy allusions and telling hits interspersed through it, held the closest attention of the audience to the close, and hardly half a dozen left the building until it was finished. He speaks with a very strong Scotch accent, and is by no means a graceful orator, but he produced throughout a most favourable impression upon all his hearers, and especially upon the students, one of whom shouted as the speaker closed, "Long live President M'Cosh," and then proposed three cheers, which were given with a will, followed by the usual tiger and "rocket." This rocket, by the way, is a thoroughly Princeton institution, and as such deserves a word of description. It is given with a f-z-z-z—boom—a—h! The first exclamation is supposed to imitate the flight of a rocket in the air; the second the explosion, and the third the admiring exclamations of the enthusiastic spectators as they witness the burst of coloured fire. It is believed this species of vocal pyrotechnics originated in the army, but wherever it came from, the effect of it, as given by a couple of hundred students who have "given their minds" to perfecting themselves in the art, is ludicrous in the extreme.—*New York Times.*

EARTHQUAKES IN ENGLAND.—Shocks of some severity were no unusual event some centuries ago in this country. In 974 Wendover tells us that a great earthquake shook all England. In 1081 one occurred, which was attended "with heavy bellowing." In 1089 there was "a mickle earth-stirring over all England," says the *Saxon Chronicle*, and the annalist notices that the harvest was especially backward. "In 1110," says Florence of Worcester, "there was a very great earthquake at Shrewsbury. The river Trent was dried up at Nottingham from morning to the third hour of the day, so that men walked dryshod through its channel." In 1133 there was a great earthquake in many parts of England. "In 1165," says Matthew Paris, "there was an earthquake in Ely, Norfolk, and Suffolk, so that it threw down men who were standing, and rang the bells." The same writer records another in 1187, when many buildings were thrown down; and another in 1247, which he speaks of as especially violent on the banks of the Thames, where it shook down many buildings. One feature of it was that some days afterwards the sea became preternaturally calm, as if the tides had ceased, and remained so for three months. Next year the western parts of England were the great sufferers. In the diocese of Bath wide rents opened in the walls, and a cupola on the tower of Wells Cathedral was dashed down upon the roof. At St. David's great damage was done to the cathedral. Two years later a shock was felt in Buckingham-

shire, which caused more panic than injury, the accompanying sound being like thunder underground. It was noticed that the birds were driven wild with fear. "In 1275," says Matthew of Westminster, "there was a general earthquake, by the violence of which the church of St. Michael of the Hill, outside Glastonbury, fell down, levelled with the soil." Many other English churches suffered in a less degree. From this time earthquakes seem to have been less common; but in 1332 there was one which shook down some churches in Kent, and which a poet of the time has described rather vividly. Three years later there were two shocks, but they seem to have been very slight, as Walsingham only interprets the first to mean an expedition against Scotland, and the second a vain excitement in the political world. I have carefully confined myself to historical notices. But there are legends which ascribe the destruction of whole cities or armies to convulsions of this kind. Camden records that the town of Kenchester was destroyed by an earthquake. The "Chronicle of Evesham" says the same of Alcester, but as the visitation in this case was a special judgment on the smiths of the town, who drowned St. Egwin's preaching with the noise of their hammers, there is reason to hope that it was a purely local infliction. Reginald of Durham says that at Mungedene Hill, near Norham-on-Tweed, the earth opened and swallowed up many thousand Scots who were then ravaging St. Cuthbert's lands. These traditions may, perhaps, be taken to show that the popular fancy in England recognised earthquakes as an occasion of violent change. Of course, I do not pretend that my list is exhaustive even for the 12th and 13th centuries, nor have I touched upon such geological theories as Mr. Geikie's, that there has been a great upheaval of Scotland about the Antoine wall, or a great recession of the sea since Roman times.—*The Spectator.*

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S REPORT ON AUSTRALIAN PRESERVED MEAT.—The following report has been furnished to the Controller of the Victualling Department of the Navy:—"The Melbourne Meat Preserving Company having requested that a supply of meat preserved by them might be received on board of her Majesty's ship under my command, and reported on after the ship's return to England, and as I consider now that the project of furnishing the English market with meat preserved by various processes is being so actively carried out in Australia, that any information thereupon might be advantageous to the public service, I granted permission for the shipment, and beg to furnish the following remarks on the preserved meat referred to:—The supply consisted of eight 12-lb. tins, each three legs mutton; eight 9-lb. tins, each two legs mutton; thirty-six 6-lb. tins, each one leg mutton. Total, 334lb. I caused the meat to be issued to the officers' messes, and tested by the petty officers on several occasions, and they are unanimous in opinion that, as preserved meat, it is most excellent, apparently containing much nutriment, and is solid, juicy, and sweet. None of the tins have proved defective, and the bones of the legs having been removed, every particle contained in the tins is available for food. I have endeavoured to ascertain at what price similar meat can be delivered at one of her Majesty's victualling-yards, and although the company, being only in process of formation, were unable to speak definitely, they stated they expected to be able to supply it to an almost unlimited extent at from 6d. to 7d. per lb. (inclusive of carriage and landing), according to the size of the canisters in which the meat may be ordered to be packed.—ALFRED, Captain."

ALABAMA CLAIMS.—In the "Wellington Despatches," of the date of the Canning Foreign Administration, are some letters applicable to the Alabama discussion. The subject at that time was the breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act, by Lord Cochrane, who, with British seamen, helped the cause of independence in South America. The Duke, in his plain, straightforward way, wrote:—"I am afraid that the world will not entirely acquit us of at least not doing our utmost to prevent this breach of neutrality." "We do not stand as we ought," he observes in a second letter, "particularly in this case of Lord Cochrane. We allowed him to escape from a prosecution which we intended to commence against him; and we did enough respecting armaments to show that we felt it was our duty as neutrals to prevent expeditions from being fitted out in this country by either belligerent, but not enough really to prevent the fitting out of such armaments. Accordingly they have been fitted out, and have sailed, and we shall soon learn the result."—*Wellington Despatches.*